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Federal Government Operations FOIAb3b

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olivetti

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I am writing to express my concern over the present procurement practices of Federal agencies with regard to electric typewriter purchases. While the general procedure under General Services Administration multiple award contracts is for competitive considerations to dominate with regard to price and quality performance, this has not been the case in the procurement of electric typewriters.

It is most regrettable that the use of letters of justification has increased to such a degree that such letters are accepted in a majority of all procurements for the highest price electric typewriter on GSA contract. Little attention is given to the higher costs to the Federal Government for such purchases (which amount to millions of dollars), while it is quite evident that lower cost high quality typewriters are available that will do a first-rate job. I urge you to review this situation to determine the extent to which excessive use of the letter of justification has taken place.

I believe you will find that an increasing number of all electric typewriter justifications state that the availability of type style and pitch change is necessary to meet needs. The fact of the matter is that most locations require the same type style and carriage width to accomplish 75 - 80% of their typing needs. These tasks are for the most part daily repetitive, routine functions.

The justification letter therefore would be suitable to only 20 to 25% of the overall secretarial skill level needs. The emphasis on so-called unique or time-saving features is misplaced in a great majority of the cases.

Because of this development, an increase of well over 40% is occurring in the cost to the government of the procurement of electric typewriters. This has led not only to a restriction of competition but also to a far greater price being paid by the government to accomplish quality information processing than should be the case.

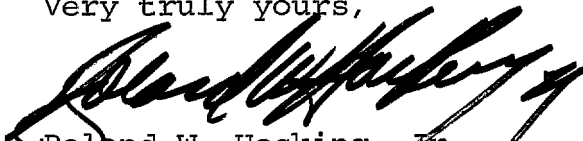
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As a domestic manufacturer whose interests are clearly placed within the United States, Olivetti Corporation of America offers a first-rate series of electric typewriters which can meet the Federal Government's requirements at considerable savings to the government and to the taxpayer. We view with grave concern the procurement methods being employed which circumvent this possibility. Our quality product is not of a superficial nature; it has durability, reliability and efficiency, as well as attractive form. We believe it is only fair to enable us to compete on even terms in the overall government typewriter market in the accepted spirit of GSA's competitive policies.

For these reasons, we sincerely request that you review the procurement practices for electric typewriters being employed in your agency to ensure that quality typewriters are purchased at the lowest possible cost. The use of letters of justification should not be employed for equipment purchase "over kill". We would be most grateful for such a review to be carried out and implemented beginning in the last quarter of this fiscal year.

My thanks for your attention to this matter. I would welcome any inquiries for additional information or comparative quality or costs.

Very truly yours,



Roland W. Hosking, Jr.

Director, Federal Government Operations